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### Parley's Fables

Ingram Cobbin

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PARLEY'S  
FABLES

Gift of Mrs. Merriam Cornell  
Dec. 9, 1992

## PREFACE.

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THIS little book is chiefly compiled from a collection of Fables, by Ingram Cobbin, recently published in London. That work was expressly written for youth, and seemed, on the whole, happily adapted to the inculcation of religion and morality. In an attempt to render this work still more suitable to the purposes of education and moral culture, I have rejected such stories as might seem of questionable utility, and remodeled those that are retained. I hope I may have so far succeeded in my desire to benefit and please my youthful readers, as to have prepared a book of Fables that may, in amusing the fancy, carry home to the heart many lasting lessons of virtue.

I am well aware that conscientious scruples are entertained by many wise and good people as to the use of fiction in juvenile books; and perhaps particular objections are supposed to exist against books

... of danger; and young

of fables. But it appears to me that the argument commonly lies against the *abuse*, and not against the *use*, of fiction. Parables are not only fictions, but are closely allied to fables; and of these the Scriptures furnish us many examples. This alone is a sufficient refutation of all arguments against fable or fiction, properly used.

Addison recommends fables, as exhilarating to the mind by fanciful representations, while, in its very moments of relaxation, it thus lays up lessons of truth. He also remarks, that "Jotham's fable of the trees is the oldest extant, and as beautiful as any made since." Nathan's fable of the poor man is next in antiquity, and may perhaps be considered even superior to it, in affecting representation.

To these examples from the Old Testament, we may add the authority of Jesus Christ, who frequently made use of parables or fables to inculcate truth. And the conscientious Cowper, in reply to Rousseau, the deist, who contended that all fables which ascribe reason and speech to animals, should be withheld, as being mere vehicles of deception, thus sarcastically

and triumphantly sings, in his fable of the Pairing Time :

"I shall not ask Jean Jacques Rousseau  
If birds confabulate or no:  
'Tis clear that they were always able  
To hold discourse, at least in fable;  
And e'en the child, who knows no better  
Than to interpret to the letter  
A story of a cock and bull,  
Must have a most uncommon skull."

I do not mean by this to recommend all books of fables to children; on the contrary, I deem most collections I have met with, very objectionable. They are generally sullied with indelicacies, and the fables they contain often inculcate craft, cunning, and worldly selfishness.

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#### TO THE YOUNG READER.

This little book is full of stories, which I call FABLES. By this I mean that they are tales, in which foxes, frogs, dogs, and other animals, are fancied sometimes to speak, and think, like men, women, and children. These *stories*, you will un-

of danger; and young

